



# Just the Facts

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014!



Thank you **Veterans**, for your service! We are honored to provide you with quality health care. Thanks to those of you who provided positive feedback about specific ways you have been served by the Salem VAMC.

Thank you **Volunteers**, for the countless hours and generous ways you show your support for Veterans and this facility.

Thank you **Employees**, for caring for Veterans using our "I CARE" principles of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence.

Thank you **Affiliates**, **Community Partners**, and other **Stakeholders** for your support of our service to Veterans.

We have so much to be thankful for, and look forward to a healthy, productive year in 2014!

**Miguel H. LaPuz, MD, MBA**  
Director



*Left to Right: Ms. Rebecca Stackhouse, Associate Director; Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Director; Dr. Anne Hutchins, Chief of Staff; Dr. Teresa England, Nurse Executive*



## 28th Annual Holiday Extravaganza

*Photos by Ryan Pleasants*

The 28th Annual Holiday Extravaganza, presented by the Salem VAMC Music Therapy Program and Voluntary Service, was held on December 19th in the Auditorium.

The Master of Ceremonies was Isaiah Bowie. Holiday music and skits were shared by Veterans and employees: Jamie Parsons, Beth Woodward, Harry Croy, Dr. Teresa England, Dr. Anne Hutchins, Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Ms. Rebecca Stackhouse, Jennifer Carson, Jerry Smith, Gracie Carpenter, Kelly Sweeney, Cindie Wolfe, Guitars for Veterans (David Bowen, Rodney Franklin, Anthony Hairiston, Willie Long, David Lynch, Frank McCray, Charlie Parker, Dan Simpson, Jerry Smith, Robert Smith, James Taylor, J.R. Viars), Isaac Scott, Charlene Scott, Richard Cocrane, Venita Turner, Demp Maxton and his Reindeer (Stephanie Cooper, Dr. Blake Lipscomb, Tei Martin, Ron Malachowsky, Venita Turner), Shannon Starkey, John Koelsch, The CLC Singers (Archie Boardwine, Bruce Friend, Dorothy Lee, Mary Mackey, Rico Swain, Webster War-rick, William Watts, Diane West), Cliff Williams, Gene Williams, Harry and Kay Hatter, James Newman, Frank Samuel, Sam Bailey, Harley Dishon, Carol Owusu, Buddy Hobson, Charlie Baughan, Kurt Kretschmer, Harry Croy, Robert Doyle, and more. Thanks to all!





# Rural Outreach

Salem VAMC has a Rural Health Team to provide information and education to Veterans in our catchment areas. The team is under Salem VAMC's Primary Care Service Line, and works closely with Home Based Primary Care, Tele-medicine, Women's Health, Mental Health, the OEF/OIF/OND Coordinator, and other services. Rural Health staff can help Veterans enroll for VA health care! Recently the Team shared information about VA health care services at: Glenvar Library, Bethany Christian Church, Hillsville, VFW Post 6000, VFW Post 1033, Hollins Library, Cumberland Mountain Community Services in Cedar Bluff, VFW Post 1115, and the Vinton Public Library.

## Upcoming Rural Health Outreach Events:

- January 11 from 11a-12p—AHA Friends & Family—Williamson Road Library, Roanoke
- January 14 from 10a-12p—VFW Post 1115, Hillsville
- January 18 from 11a-12p—AHA Friends & Family—Meadowbrook Library, Shawsville
- January 21 from 10a-12p—Diabetes—VFW Post 1033, Covington
- January 28 from 12-2p—Cumberland Mountain Community Services, Cedar Bluff
- February 8 from 11a-12p—AHA Friends & Family—South County Library, Roanoke
- February 11 from 10a-12p—VFW Post 1115, Hillsville
- February 12 from 10a-12p—VFW Post 6000, Narrows
- February 13 from 10:30a-12p—Diabetes—Vinton Public Library, Vinton
- February 14 from 10:30a-12p—Diabetes—Williamson Road Library, Roanoke

More information and upcoming events open to the public are posted at [www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov) in the events calendar. If you would like to invite the Rural Health Team to an event or to speak with your organization, please contact Marian McConnell at (540) 855-3460 or email [marian.mcconnell@va.gov](mailto:marian.mcconnell@va.gov).

## VEHICLE WRAP CAMPAIGN

*Submitted by Victoria Cox*

In an effort to dramatically raise awareness about the superb career opportunities here at the VA, Salem is proud to be participants in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Vehicle Wrap Program. This campaign provides VA medical centers across the country with the opportunity to "wrap" VHA vehicles in a bold, professionally designed recruitment message, which is sure to attract the attention of everyone within viewing distance of the vehicles.

The vehicle wrap campaign is just the latest in a line of innovative, new marketing efforts designed to spread the good word about VHA. This form of messaging is one of our greatest opportunities to display VA brand and message throughout our traveling area to everyone and the Veterans we so proudly serve.





## KINDNESS—CIVILITY— ESSAY WINNERS

September was **Kindness**—or “Civility” month. A contest was held for employees to share their thoughts. The four winners were: Pam Braun, Theresa Grossheim, Steve Lash, and Pahnnee Winnemuth. Here is the second of four winner’s entries.

### WHAT DOES CIVILITY MEAN TO ME? By Theresa Grossheim

“Civility is usually demonstrated through manners, courtesy, being polite, and generally being aware of the concerns and feeling of others. Whether an individual is at home, school, work, or in another environment, there should be a conscious effort to make being civil a part of the daily routine. In the work environment, it is sometimes difficult for people to succeed at this. There are contributing factors such as long hours and work-place stress that can lead to incivility and bad behaviors among individuals. Bad behavior and incivility can lead to an intolerance of the differences that make us all unique. The important factor to remember is that we are all human with all the emotions that go along with it.

It is at the times when we are feeling stressed and intolerant that we need to remember the healthy behaviors that help and guide us to be civil to each other no matter what the situation. When considering all of this, civility means many things to me. It is remembering the pleasantries such as smiling and saying hello, even when I am having a bad day or when dealing with an individual who is having a difficult day. It means being tolerant of others’ differences even when I may not understand them. It is being open minded and patient to the suggestions and opinions of others even though I may just want to move ahead. It is listening when I do not feel like listening, especially when the individual may be angry and striking out. It is not interrupting when an individual has something to say that is important to him or her, even if I do not see the importance. It is staying calm and not arguing with a person who is angry, and to not make it personal. It is saying what I mean, and being aware of the tone and volume that I say it in. It means making sure that I pick my battles and not argue for the sake of arguing. Most of all, it means being respectful, no matter what the situation.

I believe that being civil is something that we have to choose to do every day when we get up. Each of us when we come to work or stop at a store will meet people who wake up in a bad mood and choose to be rude to everyone he or she may meet. I believe that the Golden Rule—“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”— should always apply. When I come to work I think every day about how I want to be treated and how I want my family to be treated. If it is an angry patient that I am speaking with, then I realize that this person is angry because of something that he or she believes has been done to them. I can then choose to be angry and defensive, or I can remain calm and treat them with respect and listen to what he or she has to say. I choose to remain calm, be civil, and respectful, because it is what I would want someone to do for me. Whether or not I think it is right or wrong does not matter; what is important is the individual at that time and he or she deserves my attention. That is also part of being civil.

We all spend at least eight hours a day with each other at work. Being supportive and friendly can go a long way in making our days enjoyable. Being tolerant of each other and realizing that there are going to be differences in how we work and communicate. It requires more effort to be angry and rude than it does to be respectful and understand that there will be disagreements; but the key is in how we choose to handle the disagreements. The saying that at times we will agree to disagree comes in to play with conflict. Being civil does not mean that we have to avoid conflict; it just means that conflict can be handled in a respectful (civil) way. When there are so many different personalities and differing opinions, there will be conflict and at times anger. The key word will always be tolerance in any situation.

Civility is something that we all learn as we grow up. It was when your mom would tell you to be polite or mind your manners. It was when your dad would tell you not to interrupt because it is rude. It is when your teacher at school reminded you to listen when someone was talking. It is remembering the Golden Rule. The problem is that as we become adults we at times forget the basics of what all of us have been taught.”





## STOP THE LINE FOR PATIENT SAFETY

*Submitted by Dr. Rudolf Ulirsch/Shelby Assad*



In April 2013, the Veterans Health Administration introduced the “Stop the Line for Patient Safety” initiative. You may have heard the expression “Stop the Line” before as it originally started in the auto manufacturing industry. At that time, industry management gave everyone working in the plant the authority to stop the production line if they saw a mistake. What they found was that quality dramatically improved.

Stopping the line in the healthcare setting is about creating a culture of safety where staff members feel empowered to speak up for patient safety. This includes all staff in all areas of the medical center and is accomplished by following these three simple steps:

1. Say what you see
2. Say what you are concerned about
3. Say what you want to happen

You may be asking, what does this actually look like in practice. We would like to share how Glyne Conner, who works in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service, translated these steps into action. Ms. Conner serves as the Ancillary Testing Coordinator for our medical center which means she is responsible for any laboratory testing that is performed outside of our facility. In April 2013, the facility wanted to explore ways in which to expedite readings of tests for patients who are seen routinely in our anti-coagulation clinic. This meant that Ms. Conner was called into service. Her mission was to ensure that any system would provide rapid, accurate, and reliable results before ever being used with our patients. She did this by conducting comparison studies and found that a proposed test system would not meet the needs of our Veterans in an accurate or reliable way. So to use the steps outlined above:

1. Say what you see: Ms. Conner advised her supervisors of her findings that demonstrated the system under consideration was not accurate or reliable.
2. Say what you are concerned about: Ms. Conner expressed that because the system was not accurate or reliable that the system would create a significant patient safety concern if used.
3. Say what you want to happen: Ms. Conner recommended that a new testing system available through a different manufacturer needed to be explored and put through the same rigorous testing.

When you “Stop the Line for Patient Safety,” our Veterans will receive the best care anywhere.

## MY HEALTHeVET VOLUNTEER: CAROL TUCKWILLER

The military has played an important role in my family. Growing up, we learned to respect those who have given their time – and their lives - to protect our country in war and in peace. My father was a B-24 waist gunner in World War II. He never spoke of his experiences in Europe until the late 1980s, but once he began to talk, and after reuniting with his crew members, we were able to understand more fully why he had remained silent for so long, and we appreciated even more what he went through. Most of my uncles and an aunt were in World War II. I have nephews who are presently serving.

After retiring from a career of 31 years in historical and genealogical research, I spent the next six years doing research for the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, in Bedford, Virginia. During that time I was honored to meet and hear the stories of men and women from all branches of service from WWII to the present. During those six years I decided that when I was fully retired I would volunteer in some capacity at the Salem VAMC, and now here I am – helping Veterans to register in the My HealtheVet program. Now I am able to give something back to all of those who have given so much to keep our country safe. It is a way I can personally say “thank you for your service.”



## FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS/CONSTRUCTION NEWS

Submitted by Wayne Johnson, FMS

While winter weather has had an impact on construction activity, several projects have continued to progress as weather has allowed.

Contractors have continued interior and limited exterior work on the new Community Living Center (CLC) Dining Room Addition atop Building 2A. Due to critical stairwell work, this Project caused temporary displacement of Oncology treatment, but this function is soon moving back to their normal space in Building 2A.

Painting of the new water tank is essentially complete (see photo by Scott Branscome at right), and interior work in the tower stem is ongoing.



There are a number of projects in various stages of design including:

- Installation of a New Nurse Call System: The design is currently at approximately 30%, and the design process will continue for this critical need.
- Upgrade Utility Plant: Design effort will continue.
- Relocate/Expand Renal Dialysis: Design procurement has initiated.
- New HVAC system for Building 5: Design effort has initiated.
- Renovate Building 8 Basement (East): Design effort has initiated.
- Renovate Building 17: Design procurement is in process.
- Construct Simulation Center in Building 4: Design effort has initiated.

Several other Projects which are currently under construction will continue during the January/February timeframe including:

- Replacement of Primary Electrical Feeders: Construction will continue.
- Upgrade Underground Water Distribution System: Transition of individual buildings to the new system will occur.
- Upgrades for Access Security: Installation of conduit, cabling, and door controls will continue.
- Correct Life Safety Deficiencies: Construction of new emergency stairs at Building 75 should be essentially completed.
- Photovoltaic Array atop landfill: This project is nearing completion and is now contributing electrical power to our system during daylight hours.

A few significant projects are still awaiting delivery of equipment or furnishings in order to allow activation to proceed. Projects in this category include:

- New Mental Health Building 170 – Still awaiting delivery of furnishings with contract completion and subsequent occupancy to follow.
- New Education Center in Building 75: This project continues to be impacted by furniture vendor delays.

There are several additional contract projects in various stages of design or construction procurement and several other projects are being conducted by in-house labor.

As always, please use caution around construction activity, and heed all barriers and signage. While our trenching activity is now tapering off, there are still many hazards in several areas.

If you observe any safety concerns, please report them immediately to Safety at (540) 982-2463, Ext. 2292 or Facility Management Service (FMS) Ext. 2700.



## HOUSEKEEPERS OF THE MONTH AWARD

*Article & Photo Submitted by Nathan Rivers*

AT the last All Housekeeping Staff Meeting, Frank Samuel (pictured) and Ricky Webb (not pictured) were selected as Housekeepers of the Month for November. These gentlemen work on the 2nd Shift and work hard to keep the facility clean and in good order. Please take time to thank them for their great work each and every day!



## Starkey-Muse First Salem Employee to Complete All 3 VISN 6 LEAD Programs

*Submitted by Rod Hiduskey*

With her graduation from the Leadership Development Institute (LDI) this past year, Shannon Starkey-Muse became the first Salem VAMC employee to complete all three VISN 6 leadership development programs. She was a graduate of the inaugural Non-Supervisor Leadership Development Program (NLD) class in 2008; Mid-Atlantic Advancement Program for Leadership (MAP) in 2012; and most recently LDI in August 2013.

When asked why she continued to apply to these development programs, she offered the following: "In 2007, I had the opportunity to become familiar with the LEAD program through a write-up in the Daily Bulletin announcing application deadlines. I was not aware of this program, much less what the acronym represented. So, I researched the program details on the Intranet and gained a better knowledge of it and the High Performance Development Model (HPDM). Considering that I was only in my third year of employment with the Salem VA, I felt that Level I would best serve me as I was still trying to navigate my way in the VA and decide on what direction I wanted my career at Salem to go."

"NLD jumpstarted my desire to build on the skills and knowledge I came to Salem with and how this learning can better prepare myself for future growth within the Medical Center. It was my first opportunity to complete a federal resume, develop a personal development plan (PDP), and take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to find my personality type. Upon my completion of NLD in June, 2008, I reaffirmed a commitment within myself to ensure that the Salem VA Medical Center received an excellent return on their investment in me. Because of my goal to continuously develop my professional skills, I was accepted to MAP. MAP provided me with a leadership foundation of the types of skills required for be a successful supervisor. My participation in LDI, took my development to an even higher level, where I learned the complexities and responsibilities of managers at the service department level. All along the way in my learning experience, I have had outstanding mentors to help guide my career development and great classmates where we worked as a team to complete the program requirements to graduate."

"Being in these programs, I have learned to not only continuously development myself professionally and personally, but also the importance of helping others with their own career development. While graduation from any of the programs do not guarantee promotion or advancement, participating in the programs has afforded me the opportunity to be better prepared for increased responsibilities, leadership roles, stretch assignments, and project management. I am still utterly amazed how the VA takes the time to invest in the development of its employees to prepare and guide them to grow their skills at no financial cost to the employee. I highly encourage any employee who is serious about their own development and evolution to find out the benefits of the VISNs leadership programs."



## STAND DOWN FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

*Submitted by Tanyia Jones, Photos by Nancy Short*

The Stand for Homeless Veterans was held at the Salem Civic Center on November 12, 2013. This event is an annual program that is a collaborative effort between the Salem VAMC Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Team and several agencies including Workforce Development (who is the grantor), Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) Roanoke Valley Veterans Council (RVVC), Salem Civic Center, and the Military Family Support Center. The Stand Down event is designed to link Homeless, At-Risk, and Formerly Homeless Veterans to services and programs, that include medical services, mental health treatment, benefits counseling, housing, employment services, various other social services and a hot meal. The Homeless and At-Risk Veterans in attendance had the opportunity to speak directly with community providers about programs and services for which they were eligible for assistance.



One hundred and eighteen Veterans attended this year's Stand Down. During the event there were several dignitaries present, whom included; Congressman Bob Goodlatte from Virginia's 6th District, Congressman Morgan Griffith from Virginia's 9th District, Lou Kadiri, Constituent Services Director, from Senator Mark Warner's office, and Mayor Randy Foley of Salem Va. The emcee for the event was Dan Karnes of Roanoke Valley Veterans Council (RVVC); welcoming remarks were provided by Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Director at the Salem VAMC. Kathy Holcomb, Manager with Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), provided a special recognition to community partners, in which there were over 60 volunteers and 31 agencies present at the event.

Veterans were able to receive needed items and services from local community agencies. Some of the community services/donations included: DMV ID cards (provided by funds from the Roanoke Valley Veterans Council), comfort items were provided and distributed by Wal-Mart, which was coordinated by Ryan Pleasants, Chief of Salem VAMC Voluntary Services, Military Family Support Center provided doughnuts and coffee for the Veterans, Harry White with Workforce Development coordinated the distribution of clothing items, in which eligible Homeless Veterans received needed coats, hats and gloves, boots and prevention supplies. The Salem VAMC HCHV TEAM along with several of the VA program areas, (Primary Care Nurses, OEF/OIF/OND, Suicide Prevention, MHS, the Vet Center, Care Management-PCMHI-Hub, and CWT) provided support, guidance and linkage to medical and mental health services. The Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Administration and the Virginia Department of Veteran Services were on-site to provide benefits counseling. The Salem VAMC transportation staff, William Wright and John Gray, provided transportation of the Veterans from the local shelters; to and from the Stand Down event.

As part of the VISN 6 Synchronized Plan to End Homelessness by December 2015, collaboration with community partnerships is encouraged. The Stand Down for Homeless Veterans is an essential program to help reach the goal of ending homelessness among our Veterans. The willingness of the HCHV TEAM to work along with other VA providers and community partners, displays the HCHV program's dedication to and progress towards ending homelessness for Veterans.

## SALEM RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY EMPLOYER AWARD

*Submitted by Victoria Cox, Photo by Marian McConnell*

American National University (ANU) (Roanoke Valley Campus) presented the Distinguished Community Employer award to the Salem VAMC for our continued partnership with the campus. Salem has employed many of ANU's business and medical graduates. The Center also has employees which are adjunct instructors and the Nurse Recruiter has been a consistent participant in the campus's career fairs.

Dr. Miguel LaPuz accepted the award presented by Campus Director Ron Bradbury. In attendance were the Career Center Director Kristal Bushong, Nurse Recruiter Victoria Cox, and Business Chair Mathew George and Tim Tuttle, a recent Bachelor of Business Administration-Management graduate. Tim is currently completing a two year leadership training program at the Medical Center.





## NEW DENTAL CHIEF —OWAIS FAROOQI, DDS, MDS

Dr. Owais A. Farooqi, DDS, MDS, is Salem VAMC's new Chief, Dental Service.

Dr. Farooqi was previously the Associate Director/Section Chief, Dental Service, at the Tacoma, Washington VAMC (2011-2013); and prior to that, the Staff Periodontist at Tacoma (2009-2013).

He is Board Certified in Periodontics and Dental Implant Placement. He received his Master of Dental Science and Periodontics Specialty Training at the University of Tennessee and VAMC Memphis, TN in 2009. He received his Doctor of Dental Surgery at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 2006, and his Bachelor of Dental Surgery at the University of Karachi, Pakistan in 1998.



## RESOLVE. RESOLVE. HAPPY HOLIDAYS 2013

*Submitted by Dr. Chin-Ti Lin, Staff Urologist*

Year in and year out, we have routinely proclaimed personal and political resolutions hoping and determining to be better next year. People welcome and love it; it conforms social race and fits political correctness. But has any one of them ever been fulfilled?

Soaking in the cheerful holiday atmosphere is indeed cozy and enjoyable, and wishing each other well in years to come is graceful and appreciative. But how can we make it stick and last so we can live a long happy life?

To live longer and happier, we ought to be able to keep up a free-flowing circulation to bring and distribute the needed nutrition to nurture and nourish all tissues and organs of our bodies all the time. This way we can assure our bodies are working in good shape as long as possible; so will life.

Consequently, we can learn more and better than ever before, and so retain more of what we have learned. Then, when needed, and when taking on personal and professional chores and tasks, we can have the best possible opportunities to generate better results from what we do. That is to achieve higher productivity and independence, and less burden.

Naturally, our desired real happiness will arrive in our hearts and stay with us forever. Why? It's because we are more likely able to earn and get what we like, love, want, and need for continual daily living. That is just like a kid's smile if they get what they like, love, want, and need.

How? The bottom line to this quest still boils down to a universal healthy lifestyle — not medications, surgery, sweet talk, and sympathy; but empathy and action. That's my resolve, what is yours?





## COMPLIMENTS CORNER

- ☺ "I am 87 years old and have been attending church for 75 of those years. I graduated from a Bible college in 1952 and have been everything in a church, which means I've met a lot of nice people in all those years. I've never met a nicer person than **Dr. Charles Bethea**. You could not have a better doctor in charge of the **Danville** [community based] outpatient clinic. His clinic is one of the best and most efficiently run clinics you could hope for. Thank you!"
- ☺ "**Angela Musick** is an **Eye Doctor** and very good at it. She says an operation is the only option and since I am 87 years old, I have faith in her care. Thank you!"
- ☺ "My husband was a patient in your **Respite Care** from September to October. He was very pleased with the care and very complimentary of the **doctors** and **nursing** staff. He was there because he had to have surgery. I felt good about leaving him there and knew he was in good hands. He said the **food** was delicious and everyone was very attentive."
- ☺ "**Chronic Pain Group**: What a wonderful resource for Veterans. Excellent group. This was the best thing I've done for my pain issues. My pain is better controlled than it has been in years...The entire group of employees was great. Very helpful and informative."
- ☺ "To **Robin Haas, Patient Advocate** — You were so friendly to me and a star for me that day. Thank you for doing more than your job!"
- ☺ "Thanks to the **Lynchburg CBOC** for all the excellent service!"
- ☺ "**Kathy Hairston** is a Certified Nursing Assistant in the **Community Living Center**. Kathy is the primary caregiver for my father, a disabled Veteran who has been at your

hospital for nearly 2 years... Making the adjustment from one VAMC to another was very difficult for my father. Initially he had fits of rage and violence. From the beginning, Kathy has been the model of patience and professionalism. She treated him with respect and dignity, knowing when to give him space and when to intervene with treatment or comfort. Kathy has been like the daughter he never had. As a retired Navy Captain and hospital administrator, I know the importance of having a staff that extends your own values. Kathy is the perfect example of the caring and committed employees of your medical center. Because of her and her teammates, the Salem VAMC has an outstanding reputation throughout the community."

- ☺ "**Tameisha Haynes** did a great job this morning on drawing blood from my hand; my veins are difficult to hit and she got it on the first attempt. Very rare for me."
- ☺ "**Heather McKee** has always been so helpful and working to see that our family member gets his medications. I am thankful for her help when I call."
- ☺ "**SCNT/Sleep Program**: Thanks for having a therapist at the Lynchburg CBOC. It saves me a trip to Salem. The lady is very helpful and knowledgeable."
- ☺ "**Carroll Copen** is my nurse with Dr. Rutherford. Carroll goes above and beyond every time I see her. She is a superb nurse and she is the best nurse I have ever had or seen in my entire life. She is a Godsend to the nursing profession and the VA."
- ☺ "I appreciate the Nurses who take good care of me, like **Mary Roach-Anderson, Bridgette, Cozzette Jefferies, Dr. David Boon, and Dr. Mark Todd** in the ER. I commend them for a job well done; I feel better and have recovered fast from my illness."
- ☺ "I've been treated in VA hospitals since 1968. I presently go to the **Salem VAMC**, one of the finest hospitals in America. I receive the utmost respectable care, that one would expect. Often times, my care and the quality of my care exceeds the national average of standards of the best hospitals in America. I give nothing but the highest



accolades to Salem VAMC. I'm proud to be a Veteran and I'm proud of the Salem VAMC and everyone employed there."

- ☺ "Thanks to all the doctors, nurses, and each of the support staff who cared for our father and husband during his recent illness and death. His stay in Building 143 on **4H** and **4J** and finally ending in the **Palliative Care** Unit could only be described in superlative terms. Often all we hear is criticism of the care received at the VA; however, all we can say is WOW! Each person working there, whether cleaning the floors, or a doctor, was friendly, caring, and willing to go the extra mile. This was not true only with the patient but with the family. Our father was treated with dignity and loving care. In the final hours of his life, he was treated tenderly and all we can do is say thank you to the Palliative Care team. Each of you deserves a special honor for your service. We would like to mention a few that were very special to Dad: **Dr. Thomas Martin, Marry Halling, Betty Gillespie, Mary Terry, Beth Woodward, Noel Barrette, Marty Jackson, Carolyn Haliburton, Roger Jenkins, Dr. Madalina Macrea, Lisa Gillis, Michael Hancock, Tawanna Smith, Patience Dupely, Tom Conn, Steven Jernigan, Chaplain Ronald Michaux, Cindy Abbott, Bobby Wheeler, Jennie Seeley, and Tammy Donovan.**"
- ☺ "**Dr. Cowley (Orthopedics)** is awesome! She did what other doctors said wouldn't work...super doc!"
- ☺ "Thank you to **Charlie Hurd, Privacy Officer**, for his assistance with a privacy matter related to the release of my medical information. Mr. Hurd was very professional, caring, courteous, and understanding in his careful research of my privacy question... Mr. Hurd demonstrated his genuine interest in treating the Veteran as a person. He is a continuing example of the high quality of customer service that my wife and I have experienced from all levels of staff at Salem VAMC. That Veteran first attitude and consideration speaks highly of the management aspect a VAMC."
- ☺ "Thank you **Tammy Snyder** for all the ser-

vices that you set up for me yesterday. I don't believe I have known a more caring, dedicated group of individuals that work so well together. When they write the Mission Statement for the VA, this team should be pictured there. You have done so much."

- ☺ From the Star City Cruisers Club: "We would like to recognize **Damon Shelton** for the exceptional work he did in keeping the field clean, trash cans empty, helping with setting up tables and chairs, and so many other numerous things throughout the day. After the Car Show was over, he was there helping put tables and chairs up, cleaning up the grounds, and emptying the trash. He started early in the morning and worked late in the evening. We watched in amazement as he made sure the area was free of rubbish and safe for the patients and visitors. He was almost running around the field making sure everything was taken care of...He was very kind to everyone and we even saw him lend a helping hand to a few of our Veterans."
- ☺ "This was my first visit to see **Dr. Mamta Sapra** at the Mental Health Clinic and **Lisa Bradford**. They were helpful and understanding. We discussed my husband's dementia, drugs he was currently taking, and changed some medications at my request. Since our visit, I have called Dr. Sapra. She returned my call promptly and entered a new prescription for my husband's insomnia. I have always found everyone at the VA to be pleasant, helpful, and always on time."
- ☺ "My husband passed away in June 2013. He had excellent care while he was at the medical center undergoing treatment. Thanks to the staff at the **Salem VAMC.**"
- ☺ "All the folks in Salem and **Dr. Haik** at the Staunton CBOC went out of their way to accommodate my schedule... and needs. Thanks for the care and professionalism."
- ☺ "**Elaine Bryant, RN**, was our nurse. She was very informative and comforting. I couldn't ask for a better caregiver."
- ☺ "The **nursing** staff were excellent, knowledgeable, and very attentive. They are some of the best I have seen in a VA Hospital..."

## REPORTING SAFETY & QUALITY ISSUES

Submitted by Quality Management

Anyone may report safety and quality of care issues to the Joint Commission (TJC); and any criminal activity, waste, abuse, mismanagement, as well as safety issues may be reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG). (Concerns can be reported without fear of retaliation or disciplinary action against a reporting employee.)



The Joint Commission (TJC):

Office of Quality Monitoring, The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Blvd.  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
Phone: 1-800-994-6610  
Fax: 1-630-792-5636  
Email: [www.complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:www.complaint@jointcommission.org)

OIG:

VA OIG Hotline  
PO Box 50410  
Washington, DC 20091-0410  
Phone: 1-800-488-8244  
Fax: 1-202-565-7936  
Email: [vaoighotline@va.gov](mailto:vaoighotline@va.gov)

Be sure to check out our website

[www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov)

For events, articles, photos, this newsletter, and more! You can also "like" us on Facebook and connect with us on Twitter

## JUST THE FACTS

The newsletter is published around the 1st of each month.

If you have ideas for *Just the Facts* articles (250 words or less), photos, or suggestions, please contact Marian McConnell at (540) 982-2463, Ext. 1400; or email [vhasampublicaffairs@va.gov](mailto:vhasampublicaffairs@va.gov) at least 10 days before the first of the month.

Remember, you can read current and past issues on the Salem VAMC Intranet homepage.

*Disclaimer: We reserve the right to edit/condense articles and information as appropriate. We will make every attempt to notify the author(s) first.*

Posted online under "Resources" at:

[www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov)



## EVENTS CALENDAR 2014

Also see [www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov) Events Calendar and Employees can view Intranet Events Calendar

Jan 1	New Years Day Holiday
Jan 9	Be More Involved with Your Health Care—display in main lobby Building 143, 11:30a-12:30p
Jan 10	Breakfast with the Director for the Night Staff—4-5a in 143-1C129
Jan 14	AFGE Local 1739 Monthly meeting from 12-1p at VBA Stone Printing Building
Jan 16	Employee Town Hall Meeting from 11:30a-12:30p in the Auditorium Building 5
Jan 20	Holiday—Martin Luther King Jr.
Feb 14	Valentine's Day and National Salute to Veterans
Feb 17	Holiday—Presidents Day
Feb 21	Kick the Habit and be Tobacco Free display in main Lobby Building 143, 11:30a-12:30p
Mar 11	Eat Wisely—Celebration National Nutrition Month display in main Lobby Building 143 from 11:30a-12:30p
Mar 14	Breakfast with the Director for the Night Staff—4-5a in 143-1C129
Mar 17	DMV2GO Van—full Department of Motor Vehicles Service from 9a-4p in front of the Auditorium, Building 5
Apr 15	Be Physically Active display in the main Lobby Building 143 from 11:30a-12:30p
Apr 17	Employee Town Hall from 11:30a-12:30p in the Auditorium Building 5
May 9	Breakfast with the Director for the Night Staff—4-5a in 143-1C129
May 21	VA2K Walk from 12-1p around the perimeter of Salem VAMC starting at Building 5 Auditorium
May 27	Strive for a Healthy Weight display in the main lobby Building 143 from 11:30a-12:30p
Jun 18	Limit Alcohol display in the main lobby Building 143 from 11:30a-12:30p
Jun 30	DMV2GO Van—full Department of Motor Vehicles Service from 9a-4p in front of the Auditorium, Building 5